

# AGA MINUTES 2002

## 1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The President welcomed everyone to the meeting. He explained that although the AGA is open to all, only representatives of National Associations and Institutes have the right to vote because EERA is a federation of Associations and Institutes. Michel expressed regret that, due to the absence of Jules Pieters, the Treasurer's report would not be presented at the A.G.A. However, once the report has been received from the Treasurer, it will be sent to the National Associations and Institutes.

## 2. Minutes of previous meeting

Due to various problems with the previous Secretariat, there is no record of the minutes from the 2001 A.G.A.

## 3. Reports

### 3.1 President's report

The President's report covered four points:

- EERA Presidency
- function of the Council
- administrative problems (the Secretary General would elaborate on this)
- EERA policy with National Associations

#### 3.1.1 EERA Presidency

Michel explained that although the President for this year should have been Fuensanta Hernandez-Pina, she had resigned due to personal reasons. Michel had therefore been elected President for a one year term at the Executive Council meeting in December 2001.

#### 3.1.2 Function of the Council

Michel began by discussing the strengths and weaknesses of EERA. For him EERA's main strengths are external such as its ability to organise ECER in a different country each year, the existence of its 23 networks and its good visibility in Europe. Its main weakness however is internal i.e. the way it functions. Due to past problems and changes in the Secretariat, documents have been lost and it is therefore not clear which Institutes and Associations are fully-paid members. Michel stressed that this issue needs clarification. Membership is further discussed under point 5.

Michel explained that, in addition to the office-bearing roles carried out by the President, Treasurer and Secretary General, the other Executive members also have specific responsibilities. For example, Jorge Avila da Lima deals with the EERA website; Michel, Sverker and Martin are charged with maintaining contact with other organisations; Kyriaki Doulas and Ian Stronach look after the postgraduate network.

#### 3.1.3 EERA Administration

Following a period of administration in Edinburgh, the EERA Secretariat has now been based in Glasgow for nearly 2 years. During this time there have been two Administrators. After Eilean Mackie's resignation, Lesley Morrison, took over at the end of April 2002 and is currently assisted by 2 part-time secretaries. Further details on administration are included in the Secretary General's report point 3.2.

### 3.1.4 EERA Policy with National Associations

Michel highlighted the need for further development among certain countries. There is for example, no Association member to represent Southern Europe. EERA must therefore develop new contacts with countries such as Italy, Greece and Belgium. Although Michel has written to two members of the Greek national Association about this, a response has never been received. Michel stressed that EERA must maintain regular contact with non-European Associations, such as the Canadian Association, in order to strengthen its presence.

The question of contact with EARLI was raised. Following the June Executive meeting, it was agreed that Michel should write to the new EARLI President, inviting him to attend ECER. As no reply was received, Michel felt that an attempt at further discussion between EERA and EARLI was necessary. He suggested that it could be possible for the two associations to alternately organise ECER and an EARLI event. The Council however was not in favour of this proposal and it was agreed that EERA should continue to organise an ECER every year.

Following the President's report, he invited questions from the floor. The Network 14 Convenor, Linda Hargreaves, spoke on behalf of the other Convenors and thanked the Council for the opportunity of having a joint Council/Convenor meeting at Lisbon. It is the wish of Convenors that this becomes a regular part of the event. The Convenors also proposed that they have a representative at Council meetings. Michel agreed that this would be a good idea but stressed that any representative must be unanimously elected. Ingrid Gogolin suggested that the first Convenor representative could be elected in Hamburg. Margaret Kirkwood agreed to officially propose this to the Convenors for comment.

It was agreed that comments from the Convenors should be included in the A.G.A. and Linda was invited to summarise the other main points from the Convenor meeting. She explained that the Convenors had very positive comments about ECER and saw it as a well organised event. They were keen to commend the student helpers and technical assistants who had ensured sessions ran smoothly. The social events had also been appreciated and it was hoped this same informal style would be repeated at Hamburg. The Chairpersons evaluation sheets to record no-shows and other comments on sessions were also welcomed. The Convenors also valued the joint Council/Convenor meeting at the start of the conference and the opportunity for Convenors to meet again before the A.G.A. They also welcomed the new stability in the office and hoped that its good work would continue. Linda expressed her thanks to the Secretariat for this on her colleagues' behalf.

Another point raised at the Convenor meeting was the importance of communication between them and the difficulties of meeting between conferences. It was suggested that an email list be used to facilitate communication and perhaps solve the overlap between networks and papers. Although the Convenors were aware of the tight deadlines between receiving, reviewing and grouping proposals, they would welcome the possibility of seeing the groupings of other networks in advance to see if there are any openings for joint sessions. It was argued that this could extend the overall value of sessions. Michel explained that for this to be possible the programme would have to be compiled even earlier. Margaret stressed that this would only be possible if the deadlines for both submission and review of papers were strictly adhered to. She explained that she would work with Ingrid to negotiate a detailed schedule for Convenors for ECER 2003.

The Convenors had also discussed the different format of presentations and whether papers should be:

- a project in development (not a full paper, still in the early stages)

- a more complete and fully developed paper
- high-level symposia
- a cross-network roundtable session for the discussion of current issues

Margaret agreed that considering different formats was a good idea however she stressed that if the Convenors wished to try any new formats in Hamburg, they would need to have the information finalised in time for it to be included in the re-draft of the next Call for Proposals. If this was not feasible, she suggested postponing any changes until ECER 2004 and discussing the matter more fully at Hamburg.

The final point raised from the Convenors was the possibility of sending the abstracts for each network to all the Convenors for that network, instead of just the main contact convenor. Margaret however was not in favour of this as she saw the potential for conflicting sets of information to be returned to the office from different people at different times. She argued that problems would be avoided if the office continues to deal with one contact Convenor who returns one final set of results.

### **3.2 Secretary General's report**

Margaret explained that her report would focus on two main issues: the EERA Office and ECER.

#### **3.2.1 EERA Office**

Margaret explained that the current office staff worked well together and she stressed the importance of maintaining this teamwork in light of the previous collapse in administration. As well as a full time administrator, there are two part-time secretaries. Nan Lawless, who is contracted until 2004, and Terri Freeman, whose contract is renewable on a monthly basis.

Margaret explained that the current database caused problems in the run up to Lisbon and to ensure that this does not happen for next year, EERA needs to invest in a new system which fulfils all administrative requirements. Work must begin on this soon so that any new system can be fully tested before the proposals arrive for ECER 2003.

Margaret went on to discuss the problem of membership fees. Since Colette Yvonne's departure from the office, no letters have been sent to members to collect their annual subscriptions. The task of issuing these letters and updating the membership records therefore needs to be tackled. However, before this work can begin, various tasks concerning Lisbon must first be finished. This includes chasing and processing all outstanding delegate fees, verifying payments, issuing receipts, refunding low GDP delegates who paid the full fee because of a late decision to offer them a 50% reduction. She pointed out that problems were caused because a large number of delegates did not register or pay for the conference before attending. Only after this work has been completed, can membership letters be sent and outstanding subscriptions collected.

Margaret concluded her report on the office by discussing the complex process of financial management as a result of the various methods of registration payment. The SERA Treasurer, John Queen, has been acting as a consultant and has worked with the auditor and the office to assist with maintaining financial records and tracing payments. The EERA bank account will be moved due to various problems and the poor level of service provided by the bank. Margaret hoped that once the problems from this year have been resolved, financial management for Hamburg will be improved.

#### **3.2.2 ECER**

Margaret commended Professor Novoa and the student helpers for their outstanding

organisation during the conference. She stressed however that preparations for the conference had been very difficult for the both office and the local organisers and she planned to meet with Professor Novoa to highlight the main problems.

As well as redesigning the 2003 Call for Proposals, Margaret explained that the review of proposals would also be re-examined. She would form part of an Academic Committee together with Ingrid Gogolin and Convenor representatives, to overhaul the review process.

At Lisbon, the guidelines for Chairpersons and monitoring of sessions had proved a good way of gauging the number of presenters who fail to show. However the question of how to stop people submitting papers and then not attending still remains.

Margaret stressed that the deadline for submitting and reviewing proposals must be strictly adhered to so that the programme is not delayed. She requested the assistance of the Convenors to ensure that the timetable can be followed as closely as possible.

Margaret was pleased that ECER 2002 had seen better integration with the post-graduate network and the main conference. She hoped that this will continue and expressed her gratitude to Kyriaki Dumas and Ian Stronach for their work with the post-graduate network

### **3.3.3 Treasurer's report**

Michel Caillot expressed great regret that, due to the absence of Jules Pieters, no Treasurer's report would be presented.

### **3.4 EERJ Editor's report**

Due to Martin Lawn's absence there was no EERJ Editor's report. Sverker Lindblad however reported from the EERJ Editorial Board meeting. He reminded those present that members of EERA can subscribe to the EERJ for free. He highlighted that, although the EERJ has had only a short publication life, it maintains a very high quality. He was pleased to report that half the interest in the journal comes from outside Europe, mainly in Canada, Australia and Latin America. Ingrid Gogolin pointed out that although individual membership is free, the publisher would like libraries to become official subscribers and buy a licence.

## **4. Executive Council membership and nominations**

Michel explained that the Executive Council has 16 members, 4 of whom are co-opted. This year 2 new members have been welcomed to replace former representatives – Raymond Bourdoncle is the new French representative and Kirsten Hofgaard-Lycke is the new Nordic representative. There is a query over the representative for AEDIPE following Fuensanta Hernandez-Pina's resignation and a new representative needs to be identified. The new British representative is Ian Stronach, who works with the post-graduate network. Michel urged anyone with Greek, Austrian or Italian colleagues to communicate with them and find representatives from these countries.

## **5. EERA Membership and 2003 fees**

As membership fees have been unchanged since 1994, it was proposed that they be increased. It was agreed that the current fees for National Associations and Institutes should be increased by 20%.

Raymond Bourdoncle noted that, although EERA is a European Association, the fees are set in pounds sterling and not euros. Margaret explained that once a new bank account has been set up, it will incorporate a euro account so that the office will be able to accept membership fees in euros.

## **6. EERA Constitution**

Margaret Kirkwood explained that the EERA Constitution needed to be examined and updated. She agreed to work on this for the next A.G.A. Michel Caillot explained that because EERA is a charity under Scottish legislation, legal consultation is required before any changes to the Constitution can be made.

## **7. AOCB**

Ingrid Gogolin thanked Michel for agreeing to continue as President for a further year and concluded by warmly inviting everyone to Hamburg in 2003.